

Perry Block (also known as Hills, McLean & Haskins
Department Store)
89 Court Street (opposite Court House)
Binghamton
Broome County
New York

HABS No. NY-5443

HABS
NY,
4-BING,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

PERRY BLOCK

(also known as HILLS, McLEAN & HASKINS DEPARTMENT STORE)

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Location: 89 Court Street, opposite Court House, Binghamton,
Broome County, New York

Present Owner: Ben Cassella, Howard Franklin, Allen R. Lyons,
Philip M. Piaker and Abraham L. Piaker

Present Occupant: Vacant

Brief Statement
of Significance: A notable example of cast-iron facade in the High
Victorian Italianate Style built by Isaac G. Perry,
a Binghamton architect who was chief architect for
the State Capitol in Albany.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1860 - Deed of March 26, 1860, recorded in the Broome
County Book of Deeds 61, page 87. Cyrus Strong,
Sr., transfers property to Cyrus Strong, Jr.
Specific dimensions of the property are unknown
but it was probably larger than the present day
lot, extending from Chenango Street west to
Commercial Avenue.
- 1876 - Deed of March 12, 1876, recorded in the Broome
County Book of Deeds 102, page 42. Cyrus Strong
sells the property to Isaac G. Perry for
"seventeen thousand four hundred dollars". Perry
erects the building in that same year.
- 1885 - The building was occupied until 1971 by the
department store of Hills, McLean and Haskins
(until 1895, Hills, McLean and Williams).
- 1904 - Deed of June 10, 1904, recorded in the Broome
County Book of Deeds 199, page 98. Also recorded
in the office of the Surrogate of Broome County of
June 10, 1904. The property was conveyed to
Lucretia G. Perry by the Last Will and Testament of
Isaac G. Perry.
- 1904 - Deed of October 19, 1904, recorded in the Broome
County Book of Deeds 199, page 98. Lucretia G.
Perry sells the property to Alice Theodora

Sexsmith, adopted daughter of Isaac G. Perry.

- 1921 - Deed of June 29, 1921, recorded in the Broome County Book of Deeds 307, page 559. The lot is transferred from Alice Theodora Sexsmith to Grace C. Haskins.
- 1935 - Deed of December 30, 1935, recorded in the Broome County Book of Deeds 478, page 382. Grace C. Haskins conveys the property to Emily Haskins Luce.
- 1974 - Deed of April 18, 1974, recorded in the Broome County Book of Deeds 1213, page 323. Emily Haskins Luce transfers the property to Ben Cassella, Howard Franklin, Allen R. Lyons, Philip M. Piaker and Abraham L. Piaker.

2. Date of erection: 1876.
3. Architect: Isaac G. Perry of Binghamton, chief architect for the State Capitol in Albany. Perry lived on the top floor of the Perry Block until about 1910.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: "The first and second floors were constructed of brick, barrel-vault arches resting on the flanges of iron I-beams supported on cast iron columns. This was in that day supposed to be fire-proof construction. The exterior is of cast iron... which is unrivaled unless perhaps by the Army and Navy buildings in Washington, D.C." (Bartoo, E. H. in Wm. F. Seward's History of Broome County, 1924, vol. 1, p. 323.)
5. Alterations and additions: The lower exterior is covered by a modern veneer that is removable if the building facade is restored.

In 1896, Cyrus Strong designed an addition that extended the building along Chenango Street. Later additions extended the store to Commercial Avenue.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Structure: This structure occupies one of the most prominent corners in the center of Binghamton and has served as a landmark ever since its construction. Its chief historic or cultural interest has been its long and close association with the life of the community. Among those who have had their offices in the building are Mayor Green (c. 1902), State Senator Roger Wales and Judge Baker, county surrogate.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views and photographs: In the possession of C. Mossman McLean, 89 Court Street, Binghamton, whose father was an original partner in the store.
2. Bibliography: Seward, Wm. F. History of Broome County, vol. 1, (chapter XVIII, p. 319). (Written by the late Elfred H. Bartoo, architect.) 1924.

Prepared by Clement G. Bowers
June 30, 1963 and
Tania Werbizky
May, 1974

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation of structures in the Southern Tier of New York State, undertaken by HABS in cooperation with the Broome County Historical Society and the Valley Development Foundation, Inc.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The historical material was prepared in June, 1963, by Clement G. Bowers of the Broome County Historical Society, and in May, 1974, by Tania Werbizky, a student at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Photographs were taken by Jack E. Boucher in March, 1963. The project was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Constance Werner Ramirez, June, 1974.